

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



Office of the  
Commissioner

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**Public Hearing – February 11, 2015  
Transportation Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker  
Department of Transportation**

### **SB 481 – An Act Concerning the Development of an Enhanced Accident Response Plan..**

SB 481 requires the Commissioner of Transportation to work with the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection to develop and implement an enhanced accident response plan designed to efficiently alleviate traffic congestion caused by accidents on Interstates 84, 91 and 95.

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) currently has a number of interconnected programs and policies regarding traffic incident management. Working with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), CTDOT recently implemented the national Federal Highway Administration "Traffic Incident Management" training program. This program is based on the core principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and is designed to build partnerships with first responders, fire, police, transportation, towing and recovery, and environmental protection entities.

In April of 2014, the Department, with the assistance of DESPP, held an instructor training session for the program at the Connecticut Police Academy. This initial class was to develop trainers from various disciplines who could then be utilized to provide this training throughout Connecticut. Further, a training class was conducted with the Connecticut Fire Academy in December for 74 first responders. Additional classes are planned and on-line training is also available for emergency responders.

CTDOT has also actively worked with the Towing and Recovery Professionals of Connecticut to promote training and enhance recovery on our roads. The Department supports DESPP's "Wrecker Regulations" which set thorough standards for participating in their wrecker-dispatching program and we are committed to identifying new methods for removing vehicles involved in these crashes.

This proposed bill references the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) as a potential lead agency. As noted, the primary agency for managing highway traffic incidents is DESPP. While DEEP indeed serves an important role in traffic incident management, as the lead in response for fuel and hazardous material cleanup that may be required, we suggest that they would be more appropriate agencies to lead the proposed response plan for the efforts noted in the bill.

CTDOT, DESPP and other emergency response agencies have long been leaders in deploying the tenets of Traffic Incident Management for accidents on the highway system. CTDOT is committed to the ideals and goals of this legislation and welcomes the support of the Legislature to continue its goal of a safe and efficient transportation system.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato ([pamela.sucato@ct.gov](mailto:pamela.sucato@ct.gov)) or CJ Strand ([carl.strand@ct.gov](mailto:carl.strand@ct.gov)) at the Department of Transportation, (860) 594-3013.



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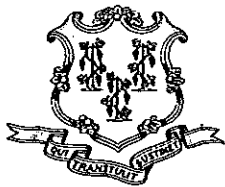
Public Hearing – February 11, 2015  
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Jim Redeker  
Department of Transportation

S. B. 484 – An Act Concerning Bicycle Crossings.  
S. B. 502 – An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety and Transportation Options.  
H. B. 6368 – An Act Allowing Towns to Establish Two-Way Protected Bike Lanes.

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) offers the following comments on the provisions contained in S.B. 484, S.B. 502, and H.B. 6368 related to several bicycle initiatives.

- *"to allow bicycle crossings to be equipped with manual signals able to stop traffic to allow crossing by the bicyclist"* - Any crossing can be evaluated by an engineering study at the request of and with input from the Local Traffic Authority. The study would determine the most appropriate treatment for each individual crossing that is in conformance with existing State and Federal laws and requirements. Legislation is not necessary. CTDOT also notes that specifying a device by legislation could preclude the use of other more appropriate treatments.
- *"to develop and update guidance and standards for protected bikeways, designated bike lanes and complete streets by September 1, 2015"* - CTDOT believes this provision may be redundant to the update of Connecticut's Highway Design Manual (HDM) that the Department is currently undertaking. The HDM update is to be complete by 2017 and will address bicycle standards and complete streets. A September 1, 2015 completion date does not give the Department the time in which to develop such guidance and standards.
- *"(1) legislation that will protect bicyclists through intersections"* - The vehicle code, where it pertains to cyclists, is in need of revisions to clarify which laws pertain to cyclists to support enforcement by public safety officials.
- *"(2) allowance for two-way bike lanes"* - Allowance for two-way bikeways is a change that should be implemented to our statutes to bring the State in line with best practices around the United States. Currently, there are two proposals for cycle tracks in Connecticut (1) Sigourney Street project in Hartford and (2) Edgewood Drive in New Haven.



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### Public Hearing – February 11, 2015 Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker  
Department of Transportation

SB 512 – An Act Concerning a Guardrail on Route 154 in Old Saybrook.  
HB 5932 – An Act Requiring a Guardrail along Route 154.

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) offers the following comments on S.B. 512 and H.B. 5932 requiring CTDOT to erect a guardrail on Route 154 in Old Saybrook to prevent parking and preserve the nearby wetlands.

Guardrails are installed to prevent drivers from roadside hazards such as fixed objects or steep slopes. The guardrail itself is a fixed object that can cause injury if struck and therefore is only installed in locations where the danger of not installing it is greater than the danger associated with striking it. Installing a guardrail where not needed, to protect wetlands, would be an obvious violation of roadside safety standards and policies.

There may be other alternatives that could be considered to help prevent parking on wetlands, such as signs, flexible delineators, fabric fencing, etc., but enforcement is probably the most effective and practical means of accomplishing this goal.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato ([pamela.sucato@ct.gov](mailto:pamela.sucato@ct.gov)) or CJ Strand ([carl.strand@ct.gov](mailto:carl.strand@ct.gov)) at the Department of Transportation, (860) 594-3013.



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### **Public Hearing – February 11, 2015 Transportation Committee**

#### **Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker Department of Transportation**

#### **HB 5450 – An Act Concerning a Report Considering a Ban on Truck Traffic on Route 122 in the City of New Haven.**

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) offers the following comments on H.B. 5450 requiring CTDOT to undertake a study determining the feasibility of banning trucks on Route 122 in New Haven.

In accordance with CGS 13a-14, the function of the state highway system is to service the flow of traffic between the towns within the state and surrounding states. Consequently, the geometry of state highways is such that they can typically accommodate truck traffic. If necessary, geometric deficiencies are corrected to facilitate truck traffic along state highways. The Department is not aware of any specific operational issues or geometric deficiencies regarding the accommodation of trucks on Route 122 in the City of New Haven.

Route 122 is a two-lane urban minor arterial that connects I-95 Exit 43 in West Haven to Route 63 in New Haven. The 1.25 mile section in New Haven consists of one lane in each direction with marked edge lines and varies in width between 25 to 30 feet. The posted speed limit is 30mph and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is 40pmh. The 2013 average daily traffic was 10,800vph north of the West Haven town line.

The prohibition of trucks on a state highway is not recommended since it would be contrary to the intended purpose and driver expectation regarding state highways. Any truck prohibition would divert truck traffic to other roadways in the area which would likely be less suitable for truck traffic. Prohibiting truck traffic on Route 122 would likely result in trucks seeking alternate parallel routes through local roadways and neighborhoods such as Central Avenue, which are not suited for this type of usage. Such traffic diversions can adversely impact communities in a manner which could outweigh any perceived benefit on the intended State route.

It is also important to note that Route 122 connects the City of New Haven with the City of West Haven, so any restriction of truck traffic would affect both municipalities.

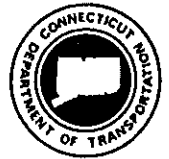
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### Public Hearing – February 11, 2015 Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker  
Department of Transportation

### HB 5635 – An Act Concerning Designation of Roads as "Accident Zones".

The Department of Transportation offers the following comments on HB 5623, AAC Designation of Roads as "Accident Zones".

Without an exposure rate based on traffic volumes on the road, it is extremely difficult to determine what a high crash location is. Ten crashes on a low volume road may be of more concern than 20 crashes on a very high volume road. In addition, metrics should be developed to target fatal and severe injury crashes versus property damage only crashes. The volume metrics are not available on many of the state's local roads.

Nationally, signs such as this have only been used on expressways and are associated with funding for increased enforcement to drive down the crash rates and infrastructure improvements following to address the condition.

The Department suggests consideration of an engineering study should be given prior to declaring a road as an accident/hot zone. In addition, the type of violation should be defined with an emphasis on moving violations.

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### **Public Hearing – February 11, 2015 Transportation Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker  
Department of Transportation**

**HB 5950 – An Act Concerning Centerline Rumble Cuts.  
HB 6341 – An Act Concerning Construction of Rumble Strips on Route 66.**

The Department of Transportation is supportive of Centerline Rumble Strips (CLRS) to reduce crashes and offers the following comments.

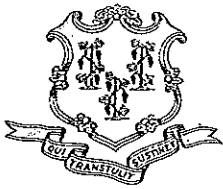
CLRS are not appropriate on all state roads where there is a centerline for a number of reasons. The installation of CLRS may be controversial on state roads in densely populated areas where the dwelling units are very close to the road. Residents often complain of noise when motorists traverse the rumble strip.

There are safety concerns as well. Installation of centerline rumble strips is not recommended on roads where the centerline joint has deteriorated. If CLRS are installed over the centerline joint, they will make the pavement more vulnerable to further deterioration. Further, CLRS may not be appropriate where the travel lane is less than 13 feet. When the travel lane is narrow, vehicles may need to cross the centerline and CLRS to overtake a parked vehicle.

Finally, CLRS are commonly discontinued on bridges and structures because the depth of the rumble strip may diminish cover of the steel reinforcement. There are a few secondary state roads which are mostly on structure.

One project installing CLRS has been completed and another is out to bid with construction anticipated this construction season. The Department expects to continue to generate projects to install CLRS and to increase the number of miles to include these devices, but would prefer that site selection continue to be based on accident patterns and suitability relative to the issues raised above.

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**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker  
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**HB 6587 – An Act Concerning a State-Wide Retrofit Noise Barrier Program.**

The Department of Transportation offers the following comments on H.B. 6587 to include a noise barrier program as an eligible expense from the Special Transportation Fund (STF).

The Department established a Statewide Retrofit Noise Barrier Program decades ago with the intention of being fair and equitable to all residents of Connecticut who are located along our interstate and intrastate roadways. The priority listing is based upon need in terms of noise levels, the number of households benefiting, cost, etc. The Statewide Retrofit Noise Barrier Listing has been in place since 1985 with approximately 132 areas still remaining and awaiting noise abatement based upon their priority ranking.

In order to accurately rank residential areas as they are developed today, the existing retrofit listing would have to be updated, reprioritized and incorporated into an overall statewide listing. Additional staff would be needed to perform noise monitoring and computer analysis, which would then be used to develop a new project priority ranking for each location based upon current development, and would likely take two years to complete. The fiscal impact of such a potential reevaluation would be approximately \$3+ million. In addition, the fiscal impact of addressing the 132 areas in need of abatement would range from \$175 million to \$325 million.

The Department is also unclear as to the intent of the wording in the proposed bill – “and shall include noise abatement due to the paving of an interstate highway.” Does this refer to construction related noise during the paving project or is it meant to include paving as a type of project that would require a noise analysis? Further clarification would be necessary to address this.

For background purposes, the Department administers two programs in consideration of traffic noise and noise abatement. Type I projects relate to the proposed construction of a highway on a new location or the physical alteration of an existing highway which substantially changes either the horizontal or vertical alignment or increases the number of through-traffic lanes or; the addition of an auxiliary lane, except for when the auxiliary lane is a turn lane; or, the addition or relocation of interchange lanes or ramps added to a quadrant to complete an existing partial interchange; or, restriping existing pavement for the purpose of adding a through-traffic lane or an auxiliary lane; or, the addition of a new or substantial alteration of a weigh station, rest stop, ride-share lot or toll plaza. If a project is determined to be a Type I project per § 772.5 then the entire project area as defined in the environmental document is a Type I project.